

TECHNICAL INFORMATION PAPER No. 51-065-1216

This report provides summary information regarding the prevalence of hearing injury experienced by U.S. Army Soldiers in 2015. Soldiers who completed a DD Form 2215 (*Reference Audiogram*) or DD Form 2216 (*Hearing Conservation Data*) during Calendar Year 2015 (CY15) were included in the analysis. Information is broken out by Service component and will be updated quarterly.

TOTAL ARMY STATISTICS FOR CY15

25% of Soldiers have some degree of hearing loss:	21% Active Duty
	27% Army National Guard
	28% Army Reserve
6% of Soldiers have a clinically significant hearing loss:	4% Active Duty
	8% Army National Guard
	7% Army Reserve
2% of Soldiers have a hearing loss that requires a fit-for-duty (Readiness) evaluation:	1% Active Duty
	2% Army National Guard
	2% Army Reserve
7% of Soldiers evaluated in CY15 experienced a significant change in hearing (Significant Threshold Shift):	4% Active Duty
	8% Army National Guard
	13% Army Reserve

BACKGROUND

The Army Hearing Program traces its origins to the late 1960s with the accession of 11 uniformed audiologists. The need for more audiologists and a robust Hearing Conservation Program was quickly realized after initial studies indicated that approximately 35–40% of Infantry, Armor, and Artillery Soldiers had a clinically significant hearing loss (H-2 profile or greater). In the early 1970s, an additional 25 audiologists were commissioned with a mandate to spend at least 50% of their time performing hearing conservation efforts outside of the clinic.

Through the efforts of the Army Hearing Conservation Program, the hearing health of the Army improved. Data from 1989 showed a marked improvement in hearing health with only 15–20% of Infantry, Armor, and Artillery Soldiers showing clinically significant hearing loss. By 2000, the percent of Soldiers with clinically significant hearing loss had dropped to about 10% or less. This percentage was maintained throughout the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan with very little change in the number of Soldiers who developed a clinically significant hearing loss.

The Army Hearing Conservation Program changed to the Army Hearing Program in 2008 with a broadened focus. The four areas of emphasis include: [Hearing Readiness](#), [Operational Hearing Services](#), [Clinical Hearing Services](#), and [Hearing Conservation](#).

*See Appendix for more detailed information

APPENDIX A

Detailed Total Army Statistics

25% of Soldiers with some degree of hearing loss:

- Any threshold outside the range of normal hearing sensitivity (greater than 25 dB), CY15 data.
- Data: DOEHRs-HC Data Repository, Soldiers who had a DD2215 or DD2216 completed in CY15—Ad hoc report.

Active Duty		Data
% Hearing Impaired	21.3%	85,700 / 401,701
% Normal Hearing	78.7%	316,001 / 401,701

Army National Guard (ARNG)		Data
% Hearing Impaired	27.4%	72,425 / 264,467
% Normal Hearing	72.6%	192,042 / 264,467

Army Reserve (USAR)		Data
% Hearing Impaired	27.9%	41,795 / 149,645
% Normal Hearing	72.1%	107,850 / 149,645

Total Army		Data
% Hearing Impaired	24.5%	199,920 / 815,813
% Normal Hearing	75.5%	615,893 / 815,813

6% of Soldiers evaluated in CY15 have a clinically significant hearing loss:

- A hearing profile greater than H-1.
- Data: Defense Occupational and Environmental Health Readiness System-Hearing Conservation (DOEHRs-HC) Data Repository, CY15—Army Profile—by Testing Installation—by major Army command (MACOM)

Active Duty		Data
% Clinically Significant Hearing Loss	4.3%	20,075 / 471,144

Army National Guard (ARNG)		Data
% Clinically Significant Hearing Loss	7.9%	18,944 / 241,256

Army Reserve (USAR)		Data
% Clinically Significant Hearing Loss	7.0%	9,090 / 128,303
Total Army		Data
% Clinically Significant Hearing Loss	5.7%	48,109 / 840,703

2% of Soldiers have a hearing loss that required a fit-for-duty (Readiness) evaluation:

- An H-3 Hearing Profile.
- Data: DOEHRS-HC Data Repository, CY15—Army Profile—by Testing Installation—by MACOM.

Active Duty		Data
% Require Fit-for-Duty Evaluation	1.0%	4,941 / 471,144
Army National Guard (ARNG)		Data
% Require Fit-for-Duty Evaluation	2.5%	6,000 / 241,256
Army Reserve (USAR)		Data
% Require Fit-for-Duty Evaluation	2.4%	3,117 / 128,303
Total Army		Data
% Require Fit-for-Duty Evaluation	1.7%	14,058 / 840,703

7% of Soldiers evaluated in CY15 experienced a significant change in hearing (Significant Threshold Shift):

- New cases of significant threshold shift (STS) on periodic evaluation:
 - An STS is defined as an average change, from the reference hearing test, of 10 decibels (dB) or more at 2000, 3000, and 4000 hertz (Hz) in either ear.
- Data: DOEHRS-HC Data Repository, CY15—Positive STS—by Testing Installation—by MACOM.

Active Duty		Data
% New Cases	4.5%	18,514 / 415,077
Army National Guard (ARNG)		Data
% New Cases	8.0%	20,298 / 255,312
Army Reserve (USAR)		Data
% New Cases	12.6%	18,497 / 147,036
Total Army		Data
% New Cases	7.0%	18,514 / 415,077